

Serial No. 10/069,578

ASA-1070

Amendment

Response to Office Action mailed October 21, 2008

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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listing of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

1-15 (Cancelled)

16. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer comprising:

an analysis unit for analyzing specimens;

_____ a rack feed line for transferring common racks holding patient specimens to be analyzed ~~sampled for analysis by the analysis unit,~~ and specific racks holding specific liquids to be repeatedly sampled as needed for analysis of the patient specimens from a rack supply section;

a rack standby disk receiving the common and specific racks from the rack feed line, rotating and stopping in a state such that the plurality of common and specific racks are made to stand by thereon in a mixed state;

a rack recovery line for transferring the racks on the rack standby disk towards a rack recovery section;

_____ a reading device provided for reading discriminating information of said common and said specific racks;

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a rack transfer means operating to transfer the common and specific racks from the rack standby disk to a specimen sampling position on an analysis unit and to return the common and specific racks, from which the specimens and specific liquids have been sampled in the specimen sampling position, to the rack standby disk; and

a control unit controlling transfer of the ~~rack~~ common and specific racks based on the discriminating information read by the reading device so that the common rack is carried toward the rack recovery section after treatment, and the specific rack ~~such that the specific rack on the rack standby disk is kept standing by on the rack standby disk until a subsequent time of measurement with the specific rack.~~

17. (Previously Presented) The automatic analyzer according to claim 16, wherein said rack standby disk is disposed in a rack delivery unit.

18. (Currently Amended) The automatic analyzer according to claim 16, wherein a position of the rack standby disk for receipt of a pretreatment rack from the rack feed line in which a specimen is to be sampled and a position of the rack standby disk for carrying-out of an aftertreatment rack from which a specimen has been sampled are used in common.

19. (Previously Presented) The automatic analyzer according to claim 16, wherein said rack standby disk is disposed in an evaporation protecting chamber, in which air is maintained higher in humidity than an outside air.

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20. (Previously Presented) The automatic analyzer according to claim 19, wherein said evaporation protecting chamber is provided with a humidifier having a humidity sensor, which is operatively controlled to maintain an interior of the evaporation protecting chamber at a predetermined humidity or higher.

21. (Currently Amended) The automatic analyzer according to claim 16, wherein said rack feed line is further for transferring an emergency rack holding a patient specimen to be analyzed and the control unit controls transfer of an the emergency rack as one of the racks an holding a specimen, which needs urgent measurement, said emergency rack being to be received by said rack standby disk, and, when said rack standby disk holds the emergency rack, another one of the racks for which sampling and treatment of a specimen is being performed in said analysis unit, is suspended and temporarily returned onto the rack standby disk, wherein the emergency rack is transferred to the specimen sampling position on the analysis unit from the rack standby disk and returned to the rack standby disk after the sampling and treatment of the specimen, and wherein the suspended rack is then transferred to the specimen sampling position on the analysis unit from the rack standby disk so that the sampling and treatment of the specimen are resumed for the suspended rack.

22. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer comprising:

an analysis unit for analyzing specimens;

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a rack feed line for transferring common racks holding patient specimens to be sampled for analysis ~~analyzed by the analysis unit~~, and specific racks holding specific liquids to be repeatedly sampled as needed for analysis of the patient specimens from a rack supply section;

a rack standby disk receiving the common and specific racks from the rack feed line, rotating and stopping in a state such that the plurality of common and specific racks are made to stand by thereon in a mixed state;

a rack recovery line for transferring the racks on the rack standby disk towards a rack recovery section;

a reading device provided for reading discriminating information of said common and said specific racks;

a rack transfer means operating to transfer the common and specific racks from the rack standby disk to a specimen sampling position on an analysis unit and to return the common and specific racks, from which the specimens and specific liquids have been sampled in the specimen sampling position, to the rack standby disk; and

a control unit controlling transfer of the common and specific racks based on the discriminating information read by the reading device ~~racks in a manner that~~ and after a preceding rack is returned to the rack standby disk from the specimen sampling position, a subsequent rack is transferred to the sampling position via the rack transfer means.

23. (Previously Presented) The automatic analyzer according to claim 22, wherein said control unit controls transfer of the racks in a manner that so long as the sum of the number of

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racks actually held on the rack standby disk and the number of racks present on transfer passages of the rack transfer means is smaller than the number of racks that can be held on the rack standby disk, a fresh rack from the rack supply section is received on the rack standby disk.

24. (Currently Amended) The automatic analyzer according to claim 22, wherein said analysis ~~units~~unit is one among~~are~~ multiple units including biochemical analysis units which analyze items of biochemical analysis and immunity analysis units which analyze items of immunity analysis, and said control unit controls transfer of the racks in a manner that when a rack holding a specimen, for which items of biochemical analysis and items of immunity analysis are to be analyzed, is received on the rack standby disk, the rack is transferred to the immunity analysis unit from the rack standby disk before being transferred to the biochemical analysis unit, and after the rack having been subjected to sampling and treatment of the specimen in the immunity analysis unit is returned to the rack standby disk, the rack is transferred to a specimen sampling position on the biochemical analysis unit from the rack standby disk.

25. (Currently Amended) The automatic analyzer according to claim 22, wherein said control unit controls transfer of the racks in a manner that until re-measurement is decided on the basis of results of analysis of a specimen sampled at ~~any~~the analysis unit, a rack having been subjected to sampling and treatment of the specimen is kept standing by on the rack

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standby disk, and when re-measurement is necessary, the rack having stood by is again transferred to the specimen sampling position on the analysis unit from the rack standby disk.